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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ALMATY 001042

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KZ](#)

SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: GALYMZHAN ZHAKIYANOV SHARES HIS VIEWS

REF: A. ALMATY 1017 (NODIS)

[B](#). 05 ALMATY 4532

[C](#). ALMATY 1018

Classified By: DCM Mark Asquino, reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

[1](#). (C) Summary: In a March 17 meeting with the DCM, Galymzhan Zhakiyanov alleged that Kazakhstani authorities had purposely infected him with hepatitis during his imprisonment. He also claimed that the former head of the penitentiary system had been fired because he refused to carry out an order from former KNB chief Dutbayev to have Zhakiyanov killed. Zhakiyanov expressed ambivalence about the newly-created Democratization Commission, noting that in the wake of the Sarsenbaiuly murder what was most needed was a private meeting between Nazarbayev and the opposition. In a later meeting with POEC chief, he shared his views on the likely evolution of the opposition movement, urged U.S. support for independent satellite television, and spoke of plans to visit Washington in the near future. Zhakiyanov's comments on the Sarsenbaiuly investigation are reported Ref [A](#). End summary.

Health Issues

[3](#). (C) Zhakiyanov, who suffered from tuberculosis during his incarceration, told DCM that he had just returned from Moscow and Kiev where he had been diagnosed with hepatitis in late February and had undergone treatment. Zhakiyanov claimed that the hepatitis was not from natural causes, but rather had been induced during his imprisonment. He later told POEC chief in strict confidence that he only saw a doctor because Security Council chairman Bulat Utemuratov had urged him to do so immediately on several occasions after his release. Zhakiyanov had no inkling that anything was wrong, but thanks to the tip from Utemuratov discovered the hepatitis and began treatment early enough to avoid serious health consequences.

[4](#). (C) Zhakiyanov said that while in Moscow he had met with the former director of Kazakhstan's penitentiaries, Petr Posmakov, at the latter's request. Posmakov said that recently-resigned KNB head Nurtay Dutbayev had ordered Zhakiyanov's murder during his imprisonment. Plots had included paying convicted drug addicts to kill Zhakiyanov and then alleging he had been part of a drug deal gone wrong. Zhakiyanov said the former penitentiary director was fired for foiling the plots. He had left Kazakhstan and was now engaged in prison work in Russia. Posmakov was not ready to confirm the charges publicly or in court at the moment, as his own situation was tenuous. (He had entered Russia illegally and obtained a Russian passport there. His Russian counterpart in the penitentiary system had set him up with a job.)

15. (C) Note: In a one-on-one with the Ambassador following a December 28 meeting (Ref B), Altynbek Sarsenbaiuly alleged that Kazakhstani authorities had infected Zhakiyanov with an unspecified illness that would only become apparent after his release. Sarsenbaiuly claimed that "a very high official" had shared the information with him a month before. He speculated that the delay in Zhakiyanov's release was related to this and a need for the impending illness to develop further before his actual release. Post did not have the opportunity to verify Sarsenbaiuly's claims with Zhakiyanov before the February murders. End note.

Democratization Commission

16. (C) Zhakiyanov then turned to opposition participation in the GOK Democratization Commission, whose first meeting he said was scheduled for March 24. Views on participation within the opposition were mixed, according to Zhakiyanov. Some thought Nazarbayev was staging the meeting as a photo op to show he was engaged in "dialogue" with the opposition. If that were all it was going to be, many argued, then why participate? Zhakiyanov said that he had mixed feelings about participation. While he thought dialogue was important, he questioned whether this was the right forum. He was concerned that someone like Communist party head Abdildin could use the meeting as an opportunity to denounce Nazarbayev publicly. Zhakiyanov questioned whether Nazarbayev would risk media coverage of this happening. He commented that in the wake of Sarsenbaiuly's murder, a private meeting between the opposition and Nazarbayev would be better. He thought that the U.S. or another third party could best broker such a meeting. In any event, dialogue

ALMATY 00001042 002 OF 003

would be very hard to achieve until the opposition's suspicions were dispelled regarding Nazarbayev's possible involvement in Sarsenbaiuly's murder.

17. (C) In a March 20 conversation with POEC chief, Zhakiyanov said that there was still not consensus within the FJK leadership about participation in the Commission. FJK chairman Zharmakhan Tuyakbay was leaning toward attending, but others did not agree. If Tuyakbay went, he would do so in his personal capacity rather than as a representative of FJK. (Note: On March 23, Tuyakbay told the Ambassador that he had decided not to attend, for the reasons cited to us by Zhakiyanov. End note.) Zhakiyanov also informed POEC chief that the leadership structure of FJK had changed after the elections; although Tuyakbay remained the chairman, decisions were now taken by consensus.

The Political Landscape

18. (C) Zhakiyanov commented to POEC chief several times that it was a "new phase in Kazakhstan's political life" following Sarsenbaiuly's murder and the resulting public power struggles among the elite. He said that he was in no hurry to join the leadership of For a Just Kazakhstan or to found his own party, although he claimed that Tuyakbay had proposed that he do both soon after his release. While clearly implying that he intended to take over the leadership of the opposition eventually, Zhakiyanov stressed that he needed time to get the lay of the land and did not want to send a negative public signal by forcing the issue.

19. (C) According to Zhakiyanov, his relations with Tuyakbay are quite cordial, even though their political views differ considerably. Tuyakbay had even ordered FJK to take down the large banner with his photo at the movement's headquarters building on the day of Zhakiyanov's first post-release press conference as a gesture to him, Zhakiyanov said. He predicted that in the long run the opposition would organize

itself along the lines described by Altynbek Sarsenbaiuly in an interview published posthumously by Epokha: FJK would continue to exist as a consultative movement linking a social-democratic party led by Tuyakbay and Abdildin, and a more centrist party led by the younger oppositionists like Zhakiyanov and Zhandosov. The parties would form a voting bloc during elections. Zhakiyanov said that the vision outlined by Sarsenbaiuly had been carefully coordinated with other opposition leaders.

¶10. (C) When asked about his personal security, Zhakiyanov readily admitted to having serious concerns. (He is now accompanied at all times by a bodyguard.) He believes that Rakhat Aliyev had arranged Sarsenbaiuly's murder in revenge for the latter's role in Nazarbayev's 2001 decision to exile Aliyev to Vienna. Zhakiyanov said that Aliyev sees Zhakiyanov and Mukhtar Ablyazov as also being responsible for his exile, and could therefore act against them at any time.

¶11. (SBU) Reacting to the March 20 news that True Ak Zhol had been registered as a political party after many months of legal battles, Zhakiyanov said it was clearly a political gesture from the authorities in the wake of the murder.

Independent Television

¶12. (C) Zhakiyanov commented on March 20 that the opposition's primary concern was to create independent satellite television in Kazakhstan, in order to be able to reach the public and increase awareness of the benefits of democratic government. He said that Ablyazov had obtained a satellite channel on the Hot Bird satellite but was not using it for fear of the GOK's reaction. In addition, Hot Bird provided relatively poor coverage of Kazakhstan.

¶13. (C) The only other satellite broadcasting to the region that they knew of was Yamal, according to Zhakiyanov. It was financed by GazProm and therefore subject to censorship by the Russian government, however. Zhakiyanov asked about the status of the Central Asian Democracy Act and whether any of the \$180 million in new funding was designated for television broadcasting. POEC chief explained that the legislation was still in draft form. Zhakiyanov suggested that the USG could have a significant impact on the development of democracy in Central Asia if it were to fund a satellite that could be used by independent media outlets, somewhat analogous to the Freedom House printing press in Bishkek.

ALMATY 00001042 003 OF 003

Upcoming Plans

¶14. (SBU) Zhakiyanov told POEC chief that he was taking his younger son Yelezhan to Texas the following week to see his elder son Berik, currently studying petroleum engineering at UT Austin. Zhakiyanov explained that while he had many demands on his time, he had throughout his detention promised Yelezhan that as soon as he was released they would go see Berik in America. His first priority was to keep his promise to his son.

¶15. (SBU) Zhakiyanov added that he was planning to visit Washington in the coming months with a delegation from the opposition in order to meet with interested contacts on the Hill, at State, and at think tanks. He also hoped to meet with experts on television broadcasting to discuss technical requirements, costs, and whether any other existing private satellites covered Central Asia. Zhakiyanov asked for advice on the best dates to plan such a visit. POEC chief advised him to choose a time that did not coincide with the congressional recess periods.

¶16. (SBU) The European Parliament has invited Zhakiyanov and other opposition members to a hearing on Kazakhstan to be held April 25 in Strasbourg. Zhakiyanov says he plans to attend, along with his wife Karlygash, Oraz Zhandosov, Bulat Abilov, Tulen Tokhtasynov, and Zauresh Battalova. He is looking forward to the opportunity for the opposition to establish a broad dialogue with the European Parliament and European governments, as with the USG.

¶17. (C) Comment: Zhakiyanov realizes that he enjoys more public support than any of the other opposition leaders (Ref C), but clearly wants to avoid further splitting the opposition by pushing too hard or too fast for a leadership position. It remains to be seen if other opposition leaders are ready to allow him anything more than an equal voice in a consensus-based decision making structure. End comment.
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